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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4512
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 001886

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/14/2018
TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [CU](#) [FR](#)
SUBJECT: CUBA ALSO BLOCKS FRENCH BILATERAL HURRICANE
DISASTER RELIEF

REF: A. SECSTATE 105422
[1](#)B. BRUSSELS 01589

Classified By: PolMC Kathleen H. Allegrone for reasons 1.4 (B & D).

[1](#)1. (C) The United States is not the only country or group of countries whose aide has been refused by Havana after a series of deadly hurricanes ravaged the Caribbean nation (ref a), said French MFA desk officer Anne Suard. Suard told poloff on October 14 the Cuban government is still retaliating after the EU imposed sanctions on the Caribbean nation in 2003, even though those sanctions were conditionally lifted this past June. The only emergency aide flowing into Cuba has been through Spanish and Belgium NGOs currently operating there, although Suard clarified that no direct bilateral aide had been sent from either of these two countries. Suard noted that the GOF, as EU president, takes a pragmatic approach to relations with Cuba. She observed since the EU lifted sanctions no additional changes are likely in EU policy until a review of Cuba's progress on political and economic reforms is completed. On these issues and more, Suard opined that the GOC acts like a "spoiled child" to the detriment of its own people.

[1](#)2. (C) In advance of an EU and Cuba scheduled dialogue in Paris on October 16 (ref b), FM Kouchner has urged the EU through the GAERC to set markers for a continued dialogue on human rights, to support the transition to democracy, and to cooperate in areas such as education and culture. Suard noted the possibility that issues regarding emergency aide to Cuba would be addressed on October 16 as well. To facilitate an effective transition to the Czech Presidency of the EU, Suard noted the GOF was already collaborating well with Czech Republic diplomats who would take the lead on these issues in January 2009. At that time, Suard noted France would remain bilaterally engaged with only a handful of countries in Latin America, including Venezuela, Brazil and Mexico.

STAPLETON